

THE NEXT GENERATION AT RANSOM RAIL

By Karen Knutsen

The 1980s were a big time for the Dueppengiessers at Ransom Rail. Ransom-Rail Mark Edie (EX-91) was the second highest milk leader in the nation with a record of 46,000M 1627F and 1397P, which also put her in first place for New York milk production. She was featured on the cover of the New York News in 1992 and was the lead animal in a Ransom Rail ad in the “Mark of Excellence” issue of Holstein World. It was a time when the Nicki, Ivy and Kelly families were extremely successful. Brothers Pete and Mike Dueppengiesser had purchased the family farm in 1990 which then consisted of 100 cows. Their father, Arnold, was a German immigrant who came to the United States in 1953 at the ripe old age of 16. “He was a city boy and admits that he knew little about agriculture when he bought his uncle’s farm at the age of 20 in Clarence, NY. He later sold that farm due to urban pressure and purchased a dairy in Perry, New York,” explained Pete.

Today’s dairy consists of 1,200 milking and dry cows and another 900 heifers. Mike is in charge of the crops and

shop area, while Pete manages the dairy. The family has focused on building a herd that has healthy cows producing high volumes of quality milk, while breeding for excellent udders, feet & legs and dairy strength. Pete uses bulls such as Dusk, Sanchez, and high genomic sires like Explode, Atlantic, Ares, Aftershock and Atwood to accomplish those breeding goals.

There must have been something special in Arnold’s blood, as the German city boy who established a farm in western New York also planted a seed of farming passion that not only went to his sons, but his grandsons as well. The next generation of Ransom Rail has come on strong in recent years, and if you’ve ever spent time with Jake or Jared Dueppengiesser, you quickly realize that Ransom Rail might not have seen its greatest days just yet!

While the farm is run very much like a typical large dairy, Jake and Jared (the 15 and 13 year old sons of Pete and Roxanne) have remodeled an older barn on the farm to house show heifers and flush cows, allowing them easier access to work with some elite animals on a daily basis. “We both started showing when we were 7 years old at the Wyoming County Holstein Show, and in 4-H when we

were 8,” said Jake. Once they had that early exposure to the showing, there was no turning back. In 2007, they purchased Future-One Astronomical Cora as a 2-year-old. “She was the first animal we showed at the NY International Spring Show. The awesome cows and the exciting atmosphere made us want to be involved at this level. Seeing the Smithgalls and the Reynolds, who we tied with, work hard and achieve success, encouraged us to go home and develop our own showstring. Our current show barn was originally designed to freshen cows for the main dairy herd. We realized that we would need a place to accomplish our goal of competing at the next level. When the freshening group moved across the street, this area became available for separating our show animals. This has allowed us to feed a special diet and give them individual care. We’ve been able to maximize growth, develop rib and ensure that they are in the proper condition to show.”

Please turn to page 20



On showing...

While it's a fun hobby, the showing also provides an arena for learning and merchandising, both of which Jake and Jared have experienced. "Showing cattle, from the local shows to Madison, has been an incredible opportunity for us," Jake explained. "At the NY Spring International Holstein Sale in 2008, we purchased Co-Vale Affirmed Prescila, which was a huge purchase for us. I showed her as a fall calf at the Premier National Junior Show in Harrisburg and she shocked us by earning Junior Champion honors!" That same year, Prescila placed 6th at the International Holstein Show and was Reserve Junior All-American. As a fall yearling in 2009, she was 1st and Junior Champion at the New York State Fair (both open and junior) and was 1st and Reserve Junior Champion at the Premier National Junior Show. She then traveled to Madison and placed 2nd in the Junior Show there.

Jared's pride and joy is OCD Aspen Midnight Rain-ET, purchased at the Oakfield Corners Spring Sensation Sale in May of 2009. Midnight Rain was 1st fall calf and Reserve Junior Champion at the New York State Fair Youth Show, 2nd at the Premier National Junior Show and 3rd at the International Holstein Show. "When she was pulled 2nd, and eventually placed 3rd at Madison, I was so excited I started to cry. This was the most exciting achievement I've ever experienced and we were elated to find out she had been Nominated All-American Fall Calf!"

Prescila and Midnight Rain are just two animals that the brothers worked with during the show season. "We've developed tremendous friendships that have made the whole experience so valuable," said Jake. "Chris Smithgall and Tyler Reynolds have been great mentors because they taught us the value of doing all the important little things at home in order to be successful on show day. We also learned a lot from Jack Lomeo and Michelle Ritschards about how to get everything perfect before you walk into the ring." But, Jared added, they've never

forgotten perhaps the most important lesson. "Our dad has said from the beginning, if we wanted to show cattle it would be our own responsibility for the every day care of the cattle, including feeding, bedding, washing and clipping. It's also really important to us to play by the rules in the showing. We feel that good preparation and honest, hard work, along with attention to detail, will be our route to success. Our dad taught us the value of honesty and gave us a good work ethic. We really enjoy what we're doing."

On attending sales...

It is rare to see Pete at an auction without Jake and Jared also there. Both boys love go-



Busy young men! Jake (left) and Jared (right) Dueppengiessers are involved in their Wyoming County Junior Holstein Club and 4-H Program. They both participate in dairy bowl, judging and showing, as well as school activities like basketball, football and baseball. "But our real love is the cows!"

ing to sales! "We sit on each side of our dad and harass him to bid on the ones we know will be awesome!" said Jared. "We study the sale catalogs, Holstein World, New York Holstein News and Cattle Connection endlessly to see what's being offered for sale. If we could only get credit for our school reading logs from our English teachers for this!" The duo picked out and purchased Prescila and Midnight Rain, mentioned earlier, but also Maple Downs Aspen Sally and Arethusa Survivor Aspen-ET on their own. They also purchased Arethusa Goldwyn Diva-ET, a VG-85 milking yearling from Cherown SY Delilah-Tw (4E-96). While it's exciting for the boys to think of showing potential, they have also based their purchases on sound

cow families. For example, Prescila is from Brad Cates' herd in Preble and she had three sisters in the fall calf class and one in the spring calf class at Madison that placed in the top 10. Cora, mentioned earlier, is from Willow-Terrace Gun Charo (3E-93), and while they lost her Goldwyn heifer, she is currently carrying a Bolivia heifer calf and due this month. Jared's heifer, Midnight Rain, is from a long line of Excellent "Rain" cows at Joleanna.

On the future...

Both Jake and Jared agree that they will be at Ransom Rail in the future, after attending and graduating from Cornell University, and a "mandatory" work experience off the farm. "Our dad will require us to work in the ag industry away from the home farm to gain experience for a couple years before returning home."

They also agree that they'd both like to achieve even higher productivity by "breeding an outstanding herd while improving cow comfort and internal herd growth." They also want to build new calf facilities to provide quality care for young calves, and also grow the number of acres they farm with their dad and uncle. "As brothers, we have a great relationship and would like to continue Ransom Rail, making our parents proud!"

"We feel a great deal of pride in working and developing special individuals and carrying on the Ransom Rail tradition. Our dream is to be a large dairy producing high volumes of milk along with

developing an exceptional herd of show type and high index cattle. We'd like to get more involved in merchandising and ultimately, would like to breed, own and exhibit the Supreme Champion at World Dairy Expo!"

"We realize that to compete and be successful, it takes a great commitment on the part of our whole family, as well as everyone involved at Ransom Rail. We're very grateful to everyone for their support and friendships. We can't wait for the show season to start all over again!"

Check out more information about the Dueppengiessers in this issue on page 92 and also on their brand new website, www.ransomrailfarm.com. □